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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UNOMIG](#) [UNSC](#) [RS](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: RUSSIA READY TO ACCEPT CONTINUING UN  
FACILITATION ROLE

REF: A. USUN 1012

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 114032

Classified By: Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) This cable contains an action request. See paragraph 6.

[1](#)2. (C) Following Ref A discussion with Undersecretary-General (U/SYG) LeRoy and Assistant Secretary-General (A/SYG) Mulet, Quad Ambassadors have sounded out Russian views on a replacement for UN Representative to the Geneva Talks and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM), Johan Verbeke. Russian Deputy Permrep Igor Shcherbak told Ambassador DiCarlo on November 18, that Russia could accept a replacement for Verbeke at the A/SYG level. Shcherbak also stated that Russia would support continuation of the IPRM. Russia wants to be certain that the responsibilities of Verbeke's position would not be expanded, but would continue to be to co-facilitate the Geneva Talks and the IPRM in Abkhazia.

[1](#)3. (C) In a meeting among Quad Ambassadors on November 18, French Deputy Permrep de Riviere and German acting Permrep Ney confirmed separate bilateral conversations with the Russian Mission that Russia would agree to a continuing UN role as co-facilitator of the Geneva Talks and the IPRM, and to a continuation of the support team operating under the current arrangement. Russia would want the UN representative to continue to report to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

[1](#)4. (C) The Russian Deputy Permrep had declined an invitation to meet with Quad Ambassadors as a group, and conveyed in bilateral conversations on November 18 that Russia does not want to re-constitute the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General.

[1](#)5. (C) In discussing possible replacements for Verbeke with the Quad, Germany suggested former SRSG Heidi Tagliavini, whom Ambassador Ney reported would be interested in the position. French Deputy Permrep de Riviere said that France was considering its Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow, Phillipe Lefort, who had previously served as Ambassador to Georgia, but that France was not yet prepared to formally propose him. In his bilateral conversation with Ambassador DiCarlo, Russian Deputy Permrep Shcherbak had mentioned DPKO Office Director for Europe David Harland or former OSCE Kosovo Head of Mission Tim Guldemann as possible successors to Verbeke.

#### NEXT STEPS AND ACTION REQUEST

[1](#)6. (C) Quad Ambassadors agreed that the next step would be for the Quad to reach out to A/SYG Mulet to confirm agreement in principle with Russia to replace Verbeke, and to float possible names to replace him. The Quad would also ask Mulet to seek continued funding for the position from the Secretary-General. We expect that DPKO may be reluctant to seek funding to continue the UN team absent a Security

Council mandate, and we may need to press the Secretariat to secure funding without a UNSC mandate, given Russian opposition to UNSC action. USUN plans to update the Georgian Mission on the status of our discussions. USUN requests guidance from the Department on possible candidates to replace Verbeke, and for its reaction to candidates floated by Germany, Russia, and France.

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